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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001975

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2018
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [PTER](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA SITREP #2 1500: MARCH ON EMBASSY AND
RESIDENTIAL AREA

REF: LA PAZ 1970

Classified By: ADCM Mike Hammer, reasons 1.4 b,d

11. (U) Situation Report. This is the second and last
situation reports planned for today.

--EMBASSY. The Embassy compound is currently secure with no
protesters in the vicinity. Embassy and USAID/NAS personnel
have been informed that they may return to work or take
liberal leave.

--EL CENTRO BUSINESS DISTRICT. Protesters have dispersed,
and those protesters remaining downtown do not pose a threat
to U.S. property or personnel.

--USAID/NAS AND ZONA SUR RESIDENTIAL AREA. Alternate Command
Center was evacuated from the USAID/NAS building upon receipt
of report that a large crowd of demonstrators was headed
toward USAID. This group of demonstrators later passed the
USAID building and continued into the Obrajes/Zona Sur
residential area. Demonstrators were stopped by police at
the Calacoto bridge and later dispersed. Post activated the
mission telephone cascade at 1150 to advise all mission
employees and family to remain in their homes and to call the
Bolivian National Police "Roving Patrol" in the event of any
problems. An emergency Warden message was also issued
advising Amcits to stay at home. No damage or violence has
been reported from the Zona Sur residential area, where
protesters have also dispersed.

--9/16 PLANNED PROTEST. There are still reports that student
protesters will march on the Embassy tomorrow. This march
may be influenced by announcement of the counter-narcotics
certification decision the afternoon of 9/15. Mission
personnel have been told to anticipate a normal work day on
9/16 unless otherwise notified by telephone cascade.

12. (C) Comment: It is not clear why the march, which during
the morning included thousands of people, resulted in so much
less conflict and damage than expected. Charge's meeting
with Foreign Minister Choquehuanca on 9/14, in which Charge
reminded the Bolivian government of their Vienna Convention
responsibilities, may have had an impact, as might Government
Minister Alfredo Rada's public request that the social groups
not protest because the Ambassador had already left the
country. The government may also have wished to avoid
international media coverage of a violent protest during the
emergency UNASUR meeting in Santiago. Our sources suggest
that the demonstration planned for 9/16 may still take place
and may include more radical and violent elements; it is not
certain that today's relative calm will continue into
tomorrow. What was clear from today's events is that--if
instructed by the government--police are able to control
fairly sizable demonstrations. End comment.

URS